

THE HUMAN HEART—Pride

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (16:18)

INTRODUCTION—“There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. I have heard people admit that they are bad-tempered, or that they cannot keep their head about girls or drink, or even that they are cowards. I do not think I have ever heard anyone who is not a Christian accuse himself of this vice. And at the same time I have very seldom met anyone, who was not a Christian, who showed the slightest mercy to it in others. There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it in ourselves, the more we dislike it in others.

“The vice I am talking about is Pride or Self-Conceit; and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility... it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.” (C.S.Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pp.197-198).

I. COMPANIONS OF PRIDE

- A. Haughtiness (18:12; 21:4; 16:18). Haughtiness is being disdainfully or contemptuously proud. Why does pride show such contempt for others?
- B. Scoffing (21:24). Why does he scoff? It is his way of letting you know **his** superiority and **your** inferiority.
- C. Boasting (27:2; 20:6; 17:19). Pride’s greatest fear is that someone else will not notice the greatness it sees in itself. Therefore, it boasts of itself (cf. 25:14).

II. PRIDE VS. GOD

- A. Pride is the Ultimate Sin Against God (3:5-7). It is the assumption that man is self-sufficient and important enough to compete with God’s greatness, magnitude, strength and wisdom.
- B. Pride Opposes the First Principle of Wisdom (8:13; 15:33; 22:4). That principle is the “*fear of the Lord*.” How does it oppose this principle?
- C. Pride is an Abomination to God (16:5; 6:16-19). It claims honor for itself, but only God can bestow honor and He does so in response to man’s humility rather than his pride (29:23; 15:33).

III. CONSEQUENCES OF PRIDE

- A. Shame (11:2; 25:27). It is ironic that pride seeks glory for itself, yet receives shame.
- B. Contention (13:10; 28:25). What kinds of relationships experience conflict, strife, and contention because of pride?
- C. Destruction (15:25; 16:18-19; 18:12). God brings the man who challenges Him to ruin. He has no need to even compete with man for glory.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Are you looking to identify pride in yourself or in others?*
- 2) *Why is it so difficult to see pride in ourselves but so easy to detect it in others?*

- 3) *Why do God and pride not mix? What is it that causes the enmity between the two? How did Satan's pride cause the enmity between himself and God (1 Timothy 3:6)?*
- 4) *What is the beginning of wisdom (9:10)? What does the proud man lack (8:13; 22:4)? Therefore what is he?*
- 5) *Why can't pride admit that it is wrong?*
- 6) *In what way is pride competitive?*
- 7) *Does pride receive more pleasure from having what it wants or from having more than the next person?*
- 8) *From what one thing—more than anything else—does pride receive the most enjoyment?*
- 9) *Why can two proud people never resolve their differences or work together?*
- 10) *Why does the proud man 'scoff' at others (21:24)?*
- 11) *Many vices will sometimes bring people together—you may find fellowship, joking, and friends among drunkards or unchaste people. Does pride ever bring people together?*
- 12) *Is there any positive kind of pride that we should have?*
- 13) *Someone has said, 'Humility is an elusive quality, because once you think you finally got it, you just lost it.' Why is that true?*

Related Passages—12:9; 14:3; 25:6-7; 26:12